

IS "CONTRARY MARY" BAKER GOING TO JILT FIANCE OR WILL SHE FINALLY BECOME McCORMICK'S BRIDE?

Chicago's Famous "I Will, I Won't" Heiress in Europe, While Faithful Suitor Says Much-Postponed Wedding Surely Will Be in September—Left Him "Waiting at Church," But Heir to Harvester Trust Millions Persists in Quest

WHAT would YOU do if the girl you loved and wanted with all your heart had turned you down three times, once at the very altar? That is what pretty Mary Landon Baker has done to young Allister McCormick.

And what would YOU do if you were the idolized daughter of one of the wealthiest families in the land and dotting parents insisted upon an "alliance" with another family just like your own—and you could not make up your mind to go through with it?

Well, you might do just what Mary did. Anyhow, the Chicago heiress has gone back upon her word just once more, and now announces that the wedding set "surely and positively" for London in May, "or perhaps June," has been postponed until September.

Allister is still trailing along, doing his best to win his elusive bride, but without the success in his matrimonial affairs that his relatives have had in shutting off competition with the "Harvester Trust."

And here is just one more pertinent query: What would YOU do if you were a handsome, dashing and petted young actor, and you loved the daughter of one of the "Rockefeller oil trust" families, and found you were not of the blood royal, or whatever they call it, and loved her, and maybe she loved you, and all that sort of thing, and it just couldn't be done. What would YOU do?

Well, Barry Baxter, the actor, did. His friends said his heart was broken. His physician said he died as the result of an accident on the stage.

All this quite naturally brings up the question as to the sort of people the actors in this extraordinary romance, or performance, or whatever you want to call it, are, anyway. To begin with, they first burst upon an astonished land, so to speak, in a blaze of publicity when Mary failed to show up for the wedding at the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago on the afternoon of January 2 of this year. She had already postponed the wedding once, it originally having been set for the previous May.

Allister took it calmly. He explained that Mary was awfully sensitive; really, in fact, she thought too introspectively entirely. But they were made for each other just the same, he insisted, and he would go through with this thing. Well, he will go through with it if he has to keep on trying forever, or words to that effect. You may not approve of him, but Allister is just like that.

Now for Mary. Allister is right. She is sensitive. She writes epigrams every day, just after breakfast. Once she was interviewed, she said: "It is so good you've called. I've just done up a few epigrams."

Bunches Of Epigrams
And Doesn't Bat an Eye

Here they are: "We are all clowns in the dusty arena of everyday life; fate is our ring-master." "As sleep at night is intolerably delicious, so is work in the day-dream."

"Solutions is like a drug. A little of it quiets the turmoil of the brain, but too much deadens the nerves." "Now, she smiled, 'what do you think of my literary efforts?'"

The interviewer murmured something polite, then switched the conversation around to the wedding-to-be.

"I'm not married to Barry Baxter," she said, contradicting a rumor current at that time. "History tells us that actors make poor husbands, and as sweethearts they stand at the head of the class."

"I will marry Allister McCormick when I reach England. Please don't take any notice of Barry Baxter. Really he is a wonderful boy, so entertaining." "Mary's friends gloat over her originality, her unconventional way of doing things. 'Oh, she will never do anything the way everybody else does,'" they would say. "That is why they were not really so surprised when she failed to show up at the church when the affair was at last arranged. 'It's her way,'" say the faithful ones.

In fact, she once wrote a book about all her society friends and wrote it so plainly that nobody had any difficulty in picking out who was who. The painful part about it was that she showed in the book that she considered everybody in society but herself had a

Mary Sheds Epigrams—Writes Novel

ONCE pretty Mary wrote a book about her society friends. It was a frank book. So frank, in fact, that everybody got

Now are a few of them: "We are all clowns in the dusty arena of everyday life; fate is our ring-master." "As sleep at night is intolerably delicious, so is work in the day-dream."

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Black Wedding Gown Still to Make Debut

MARY spoiled a real spectacle when she failed to show up for her wedding in January.

To begin with, it was to have been the most fashionable wedding of the season, but that was not all—the wedding gown was to have been of solid black.

The whole thing was to have been done in the Italian manner, that is to say, the maid of honor was to have walked slowly down the aisle ahead of the bride, and carrying a lighted candle.

head of solid ivory. So, of course, she was the only person who read the book who really liked it.

She likes unconventional people, such as actors, and actresses, and poets, and artists, and writers, and lots of other people who have to work for a living, and tramps and lots more who do not have to work. Being a maid of honor or butler or butlers as the case may be, at the Baker home, never quite know whom to admit and whom to shut out. It requires nerves of iron to battle at the Baker home when Mary is around for it would not do to offend one of her friends, you know.

"Perfect Lover" Willing to Wait at Church

Allister admits he has her sized up right. She was made for him, he murmurs to his friends. She has a certain brain, he is convinced. Here is what she said not so long ago:

"Remember, a perfect lover never loves. Isn't that expressive?" "Sure. But what does it mean?" "Just what it says," she explained. "And remember this, too. A woman should only listen to the tiny urge of a personal destiny, called, by the groping multitude, seems to refer to the rest of us."

"Well," she was asked, "a wise girl should obey hunches at all times and I always will."

"What will the next hunch be?" "The first wedding postponement, as has been said, occurred in May, 1921. The second occurred in January, 1922. The fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago had been

shined and polished, and the janitor and the organist and the sextons and everybody connected with the edifice had been given their instructions. The church was opened, and the dim religious light, as usual, filtered in through the stained glass windows, and it was evident to the crowd outside that this was going to be some wedding, indeed.

The members of Chicago's gilded upper crust and Chicago's upper crust cried quite a layer of gift these days—the elite of the upper, upper crust were crowded into the church. The very air they breathed seemed different, unrolling left but room for the slimneck of a debutante, though the supply of debutantes had run out long ago.

These ushers were Gordon McCormick, Harold Fowler McCormick, Jr., Leander McCormick Goodhart, Henry Channon, Joseph T. Hyerson and Albert B. Dewey. They lined up in pairs in the rear of the church. Leander McCormick, the best man, stood ready.

Eric Delamater was at the organ, playing nuptial music in his best manner. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton McCormick had entered and taken their places in the front pew, as befitting the parents of the bridegroom, amid the usual polite buzz and craning of necks and rustling. Near them were other relatives, including Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, Jr., Harold McCormick and Miss Muriel McCormick.

Bridesmaids waited at the rear of the church. So did Allister McCormick. Exactly at 4 o'clock the sextons began unrolling left but room for the slimneck of a debutante, though the supply of debutantes had run out long ago.

Over in the Baker residence on the Gold Coast the anxious detectives tipped back and forth and from room to room, watching the rich and rare gifts that made the walls of the place as white as the Baker's. The atmosphere became charged with expectancy. This was going to be a wedding of weddings, for sure.

Then came one of those awful waits. It was twenty minutes. It seemed twenty hours. Then the officiating clergyman entered through a side door at the front of the church. He made his way to the pulpit and announced that there would be no wedding.

Bride Was "Too Nervous," Is Father's Explanation

The organist struck up something designed to be cheerful and the audience filed out.

Explanations were in order. Mr. Baker, accordingly, made this announcement later in the day: My daughter is of a very nervous temperament. She became ill Sunday. Today she was ill, but got up, got into her wedding dress and then collapsed. We had to call off the ceremony at the last minute. This is merely a postponement.

"They do say that immediately after this episode Mary Baker sent the following telegram to Barry Baxter: 'When I put on my wedding dress I found I could never go through with it.' Barry Baxter was twenty-five years old. He was born in Winchester, England, and was considered one of the leading juveniles on the American stage. He had been playing with Ina Claire in 'Bluebird's' 'Eighth Wife,' but collapsed in April in a Chicago theatre, while playing there."

He was taken to New York, where he died only recently in the private hospital of Dr. E. L. Hounds, a woman physician. Dr. Hounds explained that an injury had made necessary an operation. Baxter's collapse, however, by a strange coincidence, followed immediately after Miss Baker had announced her intention of marrying McCormick, anyhow, and of traveling to London to have the ceremony performed there.

A cablegram from Miss Baker in Paris in the effect she had cancelled reservations for the trip to England for



Allister McCormick and Mary Baker at the banquet preceding the wedding which has not taken place yet

she called that she would go to her Italian villa after the wedding. There was no further excitement until the bride-to-be landed in France and proceeded to Paris.

Then came a cablegram, received May 27. It read: "The McCormick-Baker wedding has been postponed again. Allister McCormick announced today. He said it would take place some time in September." Postponement No. 3 had occurred.

It appears that Allister met the girl in Paris upon her arrival, and for a time everything seemed to be going nicely. They motored, rode and danced together and were inseparable. Friends pointed them out as an ideally devoted pair—at last—and hopes ran high.

Then the unexpected happened again, as usual. Miss Baker disappeared from Paris.

Novel Way Is Found to "Avoid" Publicity

This expected unexpectedness occurred the latter part of April. McCormick stuck around Paris, and to anxious inquiries as to what he intended doing about it he gave the same reply—he was "buying an automobile."

"They kept after him for a more definite explanation, however, and finally he told all about it. It was real news, and here it is: 'We are doing this to avoid publicity.'"

This sort of a statement made more publicity inevitable, and then along came another element to complicate the case. Harry Channon, an usher at the wedding that failed to go through as advertised in Chicago, turned up in Paris.

At once kind friends announced that Channon was running McCormick "off his feet." Channon and Mary had been seen together frequently. It was pointed out, and someone Allister was invited along, and sometimes not. This was put squarely up to Allister.

"My lips are sealed," he said. "Mrs. Baker has requested me not to talk. She wants to avoid publicity, so I cannot explain. Perhaps in a month's time I may have something to say. I cannot say whether Mr. Channon wants to marry Miss Baker. I must not talk."

Meanwhile the whereabouts of Contrary Mary were a deep secret. Finally it came out. Viscount Janze told it. Miss Baker, he said, was touring France with his wife and a maid. He said he did not know where they were.

Inquiry at the Janze residence elicited the information that the Countess Janze was at home, and not touring France after all. Where, then, was Mary?

Then came the report Mary had retreated to restful farm life, and would be found at a sylvan Normandy chateau that had been prepared for her.

A trip was therefore undertaken to the sylvan Normandy retreat, which proved to be an isolated chateau up in the hills. Mary had never been there.

Contrary Mary Bobs Up—and Still No Wedding

Then Mary bobbed up again in Paris. Following this came announcement of the postponement of the wedding until next September.

Concerning this latest development, Allister has sent the following cablegram to a relation. "Report that Mary and I have quarreled is false. Agreed to postponement. Mary is going to England Tuesday. Will follow her in a week. Will have big wedding in September. Live happily ever afterward. Am writing in full."

As and poor Barry Baxter said in "Bluebird's" "Eighth Wife." "And that's that—for now."

Mary Landon Baker, heiress, author and real life "Contrary Mary" as regards her love affair with Allister McCormick, heir to "Harvester Trust" millions



Barry Baxter, actor, now dead, whose friendship for "Contrary Mary" was one of the mysteries of the "off-again" engagement

"Miss Baker is not in love with me," he said. "I didn't marry her three weeks ago, as reported. That is sheer nonsense. It is preposterous to say there is a love affair between us."

"Allister McCormick is one of my closest pals. I never had the slightest idea why they are not married."

"Mary is a most wonderful girl, charming, exquisitely beautiful and delicate as a flower. To hurt her is a crime. And think of people hinting she did this because of me. It is inconceivable."

"Mary is extremely brilliant. When she was a little girl she was on her back with spinal trouble for eight years. During that time her mind must have grown twice as much as other people's, for she is ten years ahead of average girls in intellect."

"When I think of the unfairness of her suffering I go wild. I have not

time she first deferred her marriage to McCormick. Sometimes they were alone, sometimes McCormick was with them. When the wedding failed to come off as scheduled, Baxter at once denied that he was involved in a "triangle."



Teddy Gerard, musical comedy actress, who is hurrying from Europe to claim the body of Barry Baxter

the wedding, arrived in Chicago at the same time as the wire announcing Baxter's death in New York.

Baxter was frequently seen in Miss Baker's company in Chicago at the